

2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION

Response to Request for Information

DEPARTMENT: Police and Fire

REQUEST NO.: 178

REQUESTED BY: Alter

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REQUEST: For the Austin Fire and Austin Police Departments, please provide the job classifications and corresponding positions with job duties which could be staffed by civilians but are currently staffed by sworn personnel. Please provide the savings for each department if those positions were filled by civilians rather than sworn personnel.

RESPONSE: The responses are separated below by department.

Austin Police Department

Austin Police Department could staff 9 District Representatives Sworn positions with 9 Neighborhood Liaison Civilian FTEs.

The Matrix report on community policing recommends staffing at least 9 Civilian Community Liaison Officers (Neighborhood Liaisons) in order to reallocate 9 Sworn District Representatives currently performing civilian work back to patrol activities. One Sworn District Representative would be reallocated from each of the 9 areas. A total of 31 Sworn FTEs would remain in the District Representative units.

The average cost of 9 sworn District Representatives is \$1,139,934, while the average cost of 9 Civilian Community Liaison Officers (Neighborhood Liaisons) is \$740,132. The average annual savings of staffing these 9 FTEs with civilians would be approximately \$400,000.

Austin Fire Department

Civilian positions in the Austin Fire Department (AFD) are closely monitored to determine if they meet the requirements found in the Local Government Code and the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Austin and the Austin Firefighter's Association, Local 975. At this time, the Fire Chief does not see any opportunities to place civilian employees in job duties that are currently assigned to firefighters.

The potential positions where civilians might contribute are all held by firefighters in Staff assignments. Over the next few weeks, 21 firefighters in Staff positions are being moved to Operations to reduce overtime costs. Those positions must be held vacant to achieve the cost savings. Hiring civilians for any of the 21 positions would undermine AFD's ability to meet the cost reduction plan.

We would like to provide background information to better explain AFD's reluctance to civilianize sworn positions, even temporarily. Local Gov't Code 143.003(4)(A)(i-x), describes the positions that require "substantial knowledge of fire fighting" and meet the requirements for

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certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection under Chapter 114 of the Government Code. This includes employees who perform:

- Fire suppression
- Fire prevention
- Fire training
- Fire safety education
- Fire maintenance
- Fire communications
- Fire medical emergency technology
- Fire photography
- Fire administration
- Fire arson investigation

A Collective Bargaining Agreement can make exceptions to the State limitations, or it can narrow the limitations regarding civilian assignments. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Austin and the Austin Firefighters Association, Local 975, has a specific Article (19) on the “Use of Civilian Employees”. Article 19, Section 4 states “The Department agrees that civilian employees working in Fire Administration will not be used to perform the duties listed in Section 143.003(4)(A)(i-viii and x), or to perform Fire Administration duties currently performed by Fire Fighters.” Article 19 provides exceptions for the following 25 full-time civilian positions at AFD:

- Section 2, Fire Prevention – degreed engineers (currently have 13 engineers).
- Section 3, Fire Communications – one (1) dispatch position currently filled by a civilian that will be converted by a Firefighter position through attrition.
- Section 5, Fire Recruiting – civilian contractors and/or one full-time civilian employee.
- Section 6, Public Information Officer – one full-time civilian, but only firefighters will be used “for on-camera interviews and/or comments at fire or emergency scenes.”
- Section 7, Photography and Videography – one civilian for public information purposes, marketing and training video production.
- Section 8, Air Shop – five civilians including a supervisor who “will be under the direct supervision of an on-site Fire Fighter.”
- Section 9, Wildfire Division – civilians who will not be used for the suppression duties. “Civilians may perform community outreach and education, administer programs, provide training, and conduct wildfire prevention, including prescribed burns, under the direct supervision of a firefighter. These civilians will serve as technical advisors in the Wildfire Management, Wildfire Mitigation and Operations divisions.” AFD currently has 3 full-time civilians and roughly 12 temporary positions assigned to Wildfire.

There is a final clause in Section 10 that states, “the Department agrees that it will not use civilians to perform duties that would not be permitted under Chapter 143, except as provided in this Article. Furthermore, civilian employees will not supervise the work of Fire Fighters.”

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The Austin Fire Department (AFD) has 106 civilian positions relative to the 1,150 sworn positions. The distribution of those positions is provided in the following chart:

Function	Number of Civilian Positions
Administrative	60
Maintenance of buildings and equipment	12
Allowed by contract	24
Wellness/Risk Management	10